

There was no objection.

#### STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, violent acts in this Nation and around the world must end. Since the passage of the Violence Against Women Act, or VAWA, in 1994, the United States has systematically addressed abuse and violence against women, and we have to continue that tradition; but it appears we have just begun.

Around the world, at least one woman in every three has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Most often the abuser is a member of her own family. Women have the right to feel safe in their own homes and on the streets, and law enforcement and health officials must be equipped to deal with the special needs of these tragic situations.

The Violence Against Women Act has been the essential part of strengthening a support system for abused women in our country. Mr. Speaker, that is why I urge my colleagues to support the reauthorization of VAWA in this Congress so we can continue making the lives of all women safer, healthier, and happier.

#### RESTORE FUNDING FOR EVEN START

(Mr. CUNNINGHAM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I support the President in almost every area. But in his budget, as in last time, they took out an education program called Even Start. Former Member Bill Goodling pushed Even Start, because in Leave No Child Behind an important factor of that is encouraging and working with parents to work with their children to make sure that they are not left behind.

Unlike a lot of large government programs which are dependent on individual areas and leaders that run it, Even Start, across the board, has been extremely successful. We need to eliminate a lot of duplicative programs in education, but let us not eliminate the good ones; and let us support Even Start in this House.

And I would hope in the House we restore that education program.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE GENETIC INFORMATION NONDISCRIMINATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act. Before I begin, I want to thank my cosponsor, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER). No one has worked harder on this issue and has fought more to bring it more to the forefront.

Back in 1993, this House passed H. Con. Res. 110, recognizing the sequencing of the human genome as one of the most significant accomplishments of the past 100 years. It most certainly is. Thanks to this accomplishment, researchers now know more than ever how the human body works.

Thanks to genetic testing made possible by this discovery, individuals can, for the first time, know their risks for developing one of more than 1,000 genetic disorders.

Why would anyone want this bad news. Well, if you know you or someone in your family is going to get sick, you can plan accordingly. You can incorporate healthy habits to lessen the impact of the condition. For example, a woman who carries a gene known as BCRA, has a much higher risk of developing breast cancer than the rest of the population.

If these women knew ahead of time that they were at greater risk, they would be more likely to eat better, stop smoking, have annual mammograms and take other steps to lower the likelihood of cancer. It also gives individuals and families the chance to mentally and financially prepare themselves for whatever condition they may later develop.

The problem is that individuals are not taking advantage of this opportunity. And why not? Well, they are concerned that their genetic information will be used by health insurers to deny them coverage and by potential employers to deny them employment.

To put it bluntly, we will never unlock the true promise and benefits of sequencing the human genetic code if Americans are too paranoid to get tested.

Currently, Federal and State laws offer only a patchwork of protection against the misuse of genetic information. In addition, some States have enacted legislation on discrimination in

health insurance and/or genetic discrimination in the workplace. Despite the presence of these State laws, only comprehensive Federal legislation can guarantee everyone in the United States protection from genetic discrimination.

That is why I, along with the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY), and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO), have introduced this legislation. No one should be afraid to take advantage of the latest science to protect their health or that of their families. It is exactly the same bill that our colleagues in the Senate passed without objection, and it is strongly supported by the administration.

The bill provides commonsense protections for both consumers and companies. It contains protections against frivolous lawsuits with unlimited damages, but at the same time ensures that an individual's private, personal genetic information cannot be used against them. For example, employers cannot fire someone because they are more likely to develop a genetic disorder. Nor can they require employees to undergo genetic testing. At the same time, employers cannot be sued simply because of so-called "water cooler gossip" about an individual's condition that may or may not be true.

Under this bill, health insurance companies cannot deny coverage or charge a higher premium to a healthy individual based solely on genetic disposition to a disease or a disorder. Health insurance is expensive and hard enough to get for many Americans. Let us not make it more expensive based on factors beyond an individual's control.

As technology rapidly changes, so must Federal law. We must now act to protect our Federal investment in the human genome project. If individuals do not take advantage of the opportunities genetic research provides, we do not fully realize the return on our investment. This bill would allow them to do just that.

I am proud to introduce this legislation. I thank my colleagues who have worked so hard on it already: the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY), and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO). I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense and much-needed legislation.

#### CRACKING DOWN ON GANGS THAT TERRORIZE OUR COMMUNITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, last month I introduced with the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. BONO) the

Gang Prevention and Effective Deterrence Act of 2005, a comprehensive bill to increase gang prosecution and prevention efforts. Our legislation is virtually identical to the Feinstein-Hatch bill that was reported out of the Senate Judiciary Committee in the 108th Congress and has since been reintroduced.

The number of gangs continues to grow in communities across the country with substantial increases in the numbers of cities and counties with gang problems between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s. Since my days as a Federal prosecutor in California, I have been increasingly concerned with the growing public safety threat posed by organized street gangs, and I have also seen the destructive impact that street gangs continue to have on families, on our youth, and on our communities.

In 2002, it was estimated that youth gangs were active in over 2,300 major cities across America, with a total of over 21,000 gangs and over 730,000 gang members. Gang activity is still, regrettably, on the rise.

The gang problem is no longer a local issue but a national one, requiring a national strategy. Our legislation is designed to facilitate this strategy by bringing together Federal, State, and local law enforcement, providing them with new tools to combat gang violence, making available new funds to keep kids out of gangs to begin with.

Street gangs are increasingly focusing on running full-service criminal enterprises in the neighborhoods where they reside, terrorizing those who live in the community. Some have shown increasing levels of sophistication, exhibiting characteristics common to organized crime, and will likely continue to expand their criminal enterprises in new ways and places throughout the country. This requires new and creative ways of attacking the problem.

In 2002, the city of L.A. announced that it would begin to go after gangs in the same way law enforcement brought down traditional organized crime figures, using the Federal racketeering statute RICO to its full capacity. These racketeering laws, however, were designed to prosecute organized crime with Mafia-style organizations in mind. The Gang Prevention and Effective Deterrence Act would create a similar tool, but tailored specifically to violent street gangs by criminalizing violent crimes in furtherance or in aid of criminal street gangs.

The most lucrative criminal enterprise for street gangs has been the retail distribution of illicit narcotics. Our legislation would attack this problem by making murder and other violent crimes committed in connection with drug trafficking a Federal crime.

Street gangs also engage in a host of other criminal endeavors. Gangs are responsible for a large portion of the violent offenses, and the use of firearms is a major feature of gang violence, with

gang members far more likely than other delinquents to carry guns and to use them.

Our legislation increases penalties for criminal use of firearms in crimes of violence and drug trafficking. The bill also allows for the detention of persons charged with firearms offenses who have been previously convicted of crimes of violence or serious drug offenses.

Unfortunately, gangs have strong links to the youth in our country. The FBI reported that 819 juvenile gang killings occurred in 2003, up from 580 in 1999; and law enforcement reports the problem is getting worse.

Our youth are being held hostage by gangs. Gang involvement takes a heavy toll on adolescent development and life-course experiences.

In order to prosecute an entire gang, it is sometimes necessary to prosecute multiple defendants in the same case, including juvenile gang members. Our bill proposes a limited reform of the juvenile justice system to facilitate Federal prosecution of 16- and 17-year-old gang members who commit serious acts of violence.

Our legislation also provides more resources to bolster the fight against gangs and attack the problem at its roots, with \$650 million over 5 years to support Federal, State, and local law enforcement efforts, as well as intervention and prevention programs for at-risk youth.

Mr. Speaker, the time to crack down on the gang epidemic in our country is now, and I urge my colleagues to join the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. BONO) and me in this effort by cosponsoring this important legislation.

□ 1515

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to talk about the issue of prescription drugs and the price that Americans pay relative to the rest of the industrialized world.

Now, I understand that we are a blessed country, and I understand that in many respects we as Americans should shoulder more of the burden than, for example, the people in Sub-Saharan Africa. But I do not think Americans ought to have to subsidize the starving Swiss.

Let me just show this chart, Mr. Speaker. These numbers are very recent in terms of the comparisons of what we pay in the United States for name-brand prescription drugs and what the people in Germany pay for the same drugs. Let me cite some of these examples:

Nexium. The next purple pill. It is advertised at every level in the United States. A 30-day supply in Rochester, Minnesota, is \$145.33. That same drug at the Metropolitan Pharmacy in Frankfurt, Germany, is \$60.25. Exactly the same drug.

Look at this list. These are the most commonly prescribed drugs in the United States. Dropping down to Zocor, Zocor is a commonly prescribed drug that reduces cholesterol, particularly for people who have had heart problems. In fact, we have a number of our colleagues here in Congress who take Zocor.

The interesting thing is if you buy that drug at the pharmacy in Rochester, Minnesota, it is \$85.39 for a 30-day supply. If you buy that drug in Frankfurt, Germany, it is \$23.83.

What makes that even more interesting is that if you are a Federal employee, if you are a Member of Congress, there is now a \$30 copay on that drug. So in other words, even a Member of Congress pays \$30, when any German consumer can walk into a local pharmacy and buy it for \$23.80.

The interesting thing is if you total up these commonly prescribed drugs, in Germany those drugs will cost you \$455.57 American. If you buy them here in the United States it is \$1,040.04. That is a 128 percent difference.

What makes this even worse, Members, is that the differences between what we pay in the United States and what they pay in Germany has actually gotten worse over the last year, and that is at a time when the value of the dollar has declined by more than 20 percent. The differentials should have gotten less.

I also want to call Members' attention to an article that appeared today in the Chicago Tribune, and it will be on my Web site as soon as my people can get it on the Web site. It tells what the FDA is now doing. They are, apparently, targeting a program started by the Illinois legislature and their Governor, Governor Rod Blagojevich, a former colleague of ours, that allows Illinois seniors and others to buy prescription drugs from preapproved Web sites in Canada. The savings there average over 50 percent.

Apparently, the FDA is now intercepting these packages. They are literally saying that those drugs are illegal simply because they came from Canada. Well, in my view, that is an extension of what the law actually says, and I do not think the FDA has that power. Worse yet, they may have opened a door here now to a class action lawsuit that this administration is going to rue the day that this door was opened.

This is a very high-risk strategy for this administration. First, they are clearly putting the health of many